

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today with great sadness over the events in Lebanon.

I believe we must speak with one voice that Israel has a right to defend itself. I believe we are unanimous in our opinion that Hezbollah began this conflict; and I believe that we are unanimous that Iran and Syria continue to destructively meddle in the emerging democracy of Lebanon.

This resolution comes at a time when Lebanon—a potential unwavering ally to the United States, a western looking democracy, has become an unfortunate proxy in a war between Israel and extremism.

Right now, there are 5,000 of my constituents who are facing bombing raids and a harrowing escape from war. They were in Lebanon visiting friends, relatives, childhood homes, or just enjoying Lebanon's sites, and now they are in a war zone. As their representative, my first responsibility is to them.

The events of the last week have been horrific. The violence on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanon border has escalated, and more and more people, mostly civilians, have seen their lives forever changed.

Innocent Israelis and innocent Lebanese have been pulled into a conflict not of their own making. The "Peace of the Brave", that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin gave his life for, is today a lost hope.

Diplomacy, which the last Administration was criticized for using too much, seems to be a dirty word today.

This House, which after each Middle East conflagration brings a resolution of resolve and solidarity to the floor, could do much more to alleviate the suffering of the Lebanese.

Last summer, we passed unanimously a resolution that said, the United States would support efforts to enhance Lebanon's sovereignty. The same resolution said, "The United States should aid the people of Lebanon in their efforts to restore the separation of powers, the rule of law, and a proper respect for fundamental freedoms of every citizen."

We promised a commitment to the people of Lebanon that is not entirely reflected in this resolution. We said we would support them, and in my view the best way we can support them is to bring about a cessation of violence.

Israel's right to defend itself is absolute, but I am concerned that the current action will make it impossible for Lebanon's small military to properly assert itself along the troubled border.

We should support Prime Minister Tony Blair's plan to expand the international force along the southern border. We should also begin to rethink our own aid package to Lebanon's democratic government.

The United States can truly change hearts and minds in the Middle East if we commit ourselves to helping to rebuild Lebanon's infrastructure, help professionalize and equip their national military, and provide the economic

assistance they will need to keep their restive population employed and prosperous.

That is where I believe this resolution should be focused, and I believe it is in that omission that this Congress' policy is woefully inadequate.

The events of the past few days are heart-breaking. Not only because the unfolding violence involves our dear, and unwavering ally, Israel but also because it has sucked in Lebanon, a fragile nation that has had a bitter history and has only recently begun to reemerge from its dark past.

Madam Speaker, most tragically it was only 6 years ago that we were on the cusp of something almost magical—peaceful coexistence in the Middle East. The engagement of the United States was vital to that.

The brave dream laid out by Yitzhak Rabin was shattered by an assassin's bullet. The brave concessions by Ehud Barak and the support of President Clinton almost realized that dream.

But I believe we can get back to that moment. I believe it will take a fully engaged United States. I believe it will take a substantial investment on our part as a Congress to provide Lebanon and Israel with the assistance they need to overcome this crisis and reestablish security along their border.

Unfortunately, this resolution does not address these issues, and is an inadequate statement of policy to the parties who are friends of peace.

Madam Speaker, at this time I want to enter into the RECORD the names of twelve members of the Bzeih family who were killed as a result of the fighting—they have family in Michigan that held a memorial service for them on Sunday.

Hajji Fatme Bzeih, 80 years old; Hajji Thanya, 74 years old; Souad Nassour, 38 years old; Mariam Naem, 52 years old; Mohamad Naem, 17 years old; Malaak Naem, 17 years old; Hussein Naem, 11 years old; Naem Naem, 24 years old; Ammal Bzeih, 42 years old; Khouloud Bzeih, 18 years old; Farah Bzeih, 12 years old; and Aziza Bzeih, 9 years old.

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SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 921, which expresses the United States House of Representatives' support for the government and people of Israel at this most difficult time, and also extends its condolences to the families of all the innocent victims of the ongoing violence. I further wish to express my condolences to the Americans who are stranded or trapped in Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza amidst the crossfire between Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas. My thoughts are with them at this time.

Though I support this resolution, I feel it falls short in failing to call for an immediate cessation to the ongoing hostilities, for an end to the loss of civilian life and the destruction of

property that is occurring in Israel, Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza. Violence, death and destruction are the unfortunate consequences of war. But, here, these consequences are especially unfortunate because they have been experienced almost entirely by innocent civilians from all sides of the conflict, rather than its actual combatants. Over 200 innocent Lebanese civilians have been killed, with at least a thousand more injured. This destruction of innocent lives must immediately come to an end.

It is the responsibility of our government to protect Americans everywhere and lead them to safety during times of war. It's estimated that approximately 25,000 Americans are in Lebanon. Yet after 7 days of fighting, the government has only managed to evacuate a few hundred. It is now reported that 7,000 more Americans are scheduled to be evacuated by naval ship to Cyprus by week's end, but this is still not enough. I urge the administration to increase the pace at which it is evacuating Americans from Lebanon.

The administration must play a different, far bolder and more balanced role in resolving the current Middle East hostilities. When it comes to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the administration has been disengaged for more than 5 years. Over the past 3 weeks, we have seen the disengagement.

Starting now, the United States must be willing to again engage itself, directly and forcefully, in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. We have played an important role in the prior progress that has been made toward peace and stability in the Middle East. We must resume this role. Secretary Condoleezza Rice must immediately lead the efforts for a multilateral diplomatic return to the peace process, and hang in there until real fundamental reconciliation is achieved.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the impact the current crisis will have on the long-term prospects for peace in the Middle East and upon future generations in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and Lebanon. A continuation of the violence and hatred will only serve to harden feelings and widen the gap now separating the people of this historic and cherished part of the world, and to make the securing of a real and permanent peace in the region more difficult and elusive than ever. Israel must learn to get along with its neighbors and vice versa.

Sometimes conditions need to hit bottom in the short term before they can get better in the long term. My fervent hope is that a decade from now, we will look upon these times as the bottom of the descent, and the beginning of a wondrous ascent, led by people of good faith in the Middle East and throughout the world, that ended the hatred and enmity between Israel and its neighbors, and produced the lasting peace that the peoples of the region pray for.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR CHARLES
IVAN BITHOS

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my heartfelt appreciation and